

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Camden, AR

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Camden for a Brownfields Pilot. EPA also awarded Camden additional funding for assessments at Brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. Camden (population 14,701) is located in Ouachita County, along the Ouachita River. Due to its riverfront location, the city was once a major shipping terminal for cotton, coal, and oil. In more recent years, however, both the city and the county have experienced economic hardships and job losses; including the loss of more than 6,000 military defense-related jobs and the loss of 200 jobs at a nearby paper company. Currently, the unemployment rate for Ouachita County is 79 percent. Within the Pilot area, there is an overall poverty rate of 26 percent and a median household income of \$16,846. The Pilot area is located in the heart of the city, near the Port of Camden. It encompasses railroad property, several abandoned service industries—which are suspected to contain contamination—and dilapidated housing. Once a productive industrial and commercial center, the area is now an abandoned eyesore whose northern edge touches the riverfront.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Camden, AR

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000
Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The Pilot targets a downtown area of Camden that encompasses railroad property, dilapidated housing, and abandoned commercial buildings for site assessment and redevelopment planning.

Contacts:

City of Camden
(870) 836-6436

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The Pilot will work with the City of Camden to redevelop the Pilot area, which includes a small riverfront portion, for industrial and recreational purposes. Redevelopment of the Pilot area along the railroad and linking it with the expansion of the Port of Camden could attract interested companies, provide access to transportation routes, and increase the number of jobs and the amount of revenue generated in the city. Environmental assessment and redevelopment planning of brownfields sites in the Pilot area are critical first steps in the revitalization process.

The Pilot will use the greenspace funding to preserve open spaces and facilitate development of a riverwalk along the banks of the Ouachita River. Elements of the riverwalk would include a boardwalk, kiosks, overlooks, rest areas, and environmental exhibits.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I and II environmental assessments and assessing redevelopment costs of sites in the Pilot area;
- Engaging in site cleanup and redevelopment planning so the area may be reused in a productive, environmentally sound manner;
- Ensuring community awareness and involvement;
- Identifying agencies and resources for leveraging additional funding for cleanup and redevelopment efforts; and
- Assessing brownfields and preparing cleanup plans for properties designated for the riverwalk.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.